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1831 A

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Preamble and Resolutions,

ADOPTED AT

A MEETING HELD AT THE EXCHANGE COFFEE HOUSE,

ON

THURSDAY EVENING, AUGUST 16,

FOR THE PURPOSE OF

CHOOSING DELEGATES

TO THE

ANTI-TARIFF CONVENTION.

BOSTON:

BEALS AND HOMER, PRINTERS,

No. 42, Congress Street.

1831.

At a meeting of the friends of Free Trade, held at the Exchange Coffee House, on Thursday Evening, the 11th inst. ISAAC WINSLOW, Esq. was called to the Chair, and HENRY F. BAKER appointed Secretary.

After a mature discussion, the following Preamble and Resolutions were unanimously adopted:—

WHEREAS, The Congress of the United States has, at divers times, enacted laws, the design and operation of which are to promote the interest of particular occupations at the general expense; and, on this as a basis, a system is attempted to be established, which, in this metropolis, has always been considered to be “equally inconsistent with the principles of the Constitution and sound policy”; and with that design and purpose the law of 1828 was enacted, which, like preceding laws of the same character, is not only *inconsistent with the principles of the constitution and sound policy*; but repugnant to the very nature and spirit of a free government:

And Whereas, The principles and opinions expressed on the Tariff law proposed in 1820, by a public meeting in this city, being the result of the mature deliberation of some of the most eminent counsellors, sagacious statesmen, and distinguished merchants, mechanics and manufacturers,* and enforced, sustained and recommended to the people by all the power of eloquence—they were received without opposition, adopted without controversy, and stand recorded under the names of those from whom they emanated, and by whom they were recommended:

And Whereas, The Tariff law of 1828, being founded on the same principle and an extension of the evils of that proposed in 1820, and considering the principles and opinions proclaimed by the public meeting aforesaid, as entitled to the highest respect, from the source whence they proceeded; as confirmatory of the sentiments entertained of the present law by this meeting; as

perfectly applicable to the grievances of which we now complain; we adopt and repeat on this occasion the principles and opinions expressed on that, by the eminent men who then coincided with us in opinion, and contained in the following Resolves:—

“Resolved, That no objection ought ever to be made to any amount of taxes, equally apportioned, and imposed for the purpose of raising revenue for the support of government; but that taxes imposed on the people for the sole benefit of any one class of men, are equally inconsistent with the principles of our constitution and with sound policy.”

“Resolved, That high bounties on such domestic manufactures as are principally benefitted by that Tariff, favour great capitalists, rather than personal industry or the owners of small capitals, and, therefore, that we do not perceive its tendency to promote national industry.”

“Resolved, That we are equally incapable of discovering its beneficial effects on agriculture, since the obvious consequence of its adoption would be, that the farmer must give more than he now does for all he buys, and receive less for all he sells.”

“Resolved, That the imposition of duties, which are enormous, and deemed by a large portion of the people to be unequal and unjust, is dangerous, as it encourages the practice of smuggling.”

“Resolved, That in our opinion, the proposed Tariff and the principles on which it is avowedly founded, would, if adopted, have a tendency, however different may be the motives of those who recommend them, to diminish the industry, impede the prosperity, and corrupt the morals of the people.”

And Whereas, The professed design of the law of 1828—being to raise a revenue for the support of government, for the payment of the debt of the United States, and the protection and encouragement of domestic manufactures, by duties on importations from foreign countries; these purposes are frustrated by the law itself; for, the duties in many cases, are so enormous that the object of revenue is defeated by an illicit introduction of the dutied article, or a non importation of it; and the duties laid on the importation of raw materials being in some cases so excessive, that the articles manufactured from them, notwithstanding these too are subjected to a very heavy duty, can be imported and sold for less money, than the raw material of which they are composed:

Therefore, Resolved, That, in the opinion of this meeting, the

said law of 1828 is unwise, and unjust, impolitic and inconsistent with the spirit which ought to influence and guide the legislatures in making laws for the government of a free, prosperous and enlightened people :

Resolved, That the said law ought, in the opinion of this meeting, to be so modified as to confine its operation to the raising of a revenue for the support of government, and the payment of the debts of the United States: That, for these purposes, the duties ought not, on any articles, to be so excessive as to discourage the regular importation, to diminish the consumption, or to encourage the illicit introduction of them : That, the encouragement of manufactures by duties on importation, should be a consequence proceeding from the necessity and intention of raising revenue for lawful purposes, and secondary, incidental, and collateral to them ; and a reduction of the existing rate of duties should be mainly applied to articles of foreign growth and manufacture, not raised or manufactured in the United States.

And whereas, Some branches of manufactures, having been established by, and derived encouragement and protection from the necessity and imposition of duties for lawful purposes ; and as the total and immediate repeal of such duties would be ruinous to them, and impolitic in the government :

Resolved, That in the opinion of this meeting, the duties in such cases should not, in the first instance, be reduced below the standard of 1826 ; and any further reduction should be gradual and moderate.

And Whereas, The public mind is greatly agitated by the principle, object and effect of the said law—its principles being considered hostile to the rights and liberties of the people, and a perversion of that free constitution of government, framed and adopted for their protection and security ; its object, as intended to create odious distinctions, by giving special advantages to a favored few, and by subjecting all other classes to a tribute for their particular benefit ; and its effect, being burdensome and oppressive, unequal and unjust upon all classes of the people, except those whose interests are specially promoted by it :

And Whereas, These feelings and opinions have created an alarm and apprehension among an intelligent, reflecting and patriotic portion of the community, that unless some measures be speedily taken to meliorate the condition of the people by a re-

moval or mitigation of the grievances of which they complain, the peace and safety, the prosperity and happiness of this confederacy will be destroyed, and the Union itself endangered: *Therefore*, to avert the threatened calamities, to devise and cause to be applied a remedy for the existing evils, to promote harmony, restore confidence, and to strengthen the Union, a Convention of delegates to assemble at Philadelphia on the 30th day or September next, has been proposed and approved by many of the States—some of whom have chosen delegates for that purpose:

It is Resolved, That this meeting concur in the propriety, expediency and beneficial tendency of such a meeting at the present juncture; and, that fifteen delegates be chosen to represent, in that convention, the friends of constitutional rights, and the principles of the Federal Union, in this city; with power to act, in their behalf, for the accomplishment of the purposes, and maintenance of the principles herein proclaimed.

The following gentlemen were then unanimously selected to act as Delegates to the Convention at Philadelphia on the 30th September next:—

HENRY LEE,
ISRAEL MUNSON,
RICHARD D. TUCKER,
EDWARD CRUFT,
GEORGE BRINLEY,
EBEN. BREED,
WILLIAM FOSTER,
SAMUEL A. WELLS,
SAMUEL SWETT,
WILLIAM GODDARD,
HENRY WILLIAMS,
ABIEL CHANDLER,
WILLIAM B. SWETT,
SAMUEL D. BRADFORD,
JOHN L. GARDNER.

ISAAC WINSLOW, Chairman.

HENRY F. BAKER, Secretary.

[*] The following are the names of the gentlemen who signed the resolves passed at the anti-tariff meeting held in 1820, alluded to in the above preamble, viz.:—William Gray, James Perkins, John Dorr, Nathaniel Goddard, Benjamin Rich, Israel Thorndike, Jr., William Shimmin, Thomas W. Ward, William Harris, Daniel Webster, Nathan Appleton, Abbot Lawrence, Joseph Sewall, Jonathan Phillips, Lot Wheelwright, Caleb Loring, Samuel A. Wells, George Bond, George Hallett, S. P. Gardner, Josiah Knapp, Isaac Winslow, Winslow Lewis, Thomas Wigglesworth, John Cotton, John Parker and William Sturgis.]

The following extracts from a Memorial, presented to Congress in 1820 by the inhabitants of Salem and its vicinity, against any increase to the duties imposed by the Tariff of 1816, exhibit a concurrence in principles and feelings with those expressed in the Resolutions passed in Boston about that time, and which are embodied in the above proceedings. The Memorial is alleged to have been drawn up by Mr. Justice Story, of the Supreme Court of the U. States; and the committee, whose names are appended to it, are, as it is well known, among the most respectable and intelligent citizens of that town and vicinity.

“ Nothing can be more obvious, than that many of the manufacturers and their friends are attempting by *fallacious statements, founded on an interested policy, or a misguided zeal, or very short-sighted views*, to up-root some of the fundamental principles of our revenue policy, and to compel our merchants to abandon some of the most lucrative branches of commerce; branches which alone enable us to contend with success against the monopoly and the competition of foreign nations.”

"The memorialists most sincerely believe that it is a sound political maxim, that the more free trade is, and the more widely it circulates, the more sure will be its prosperity, and that of the nation; *every restriction which is not indispensable for purposes of revenue*, is a shoal which will impede its progress, and not unfrequently jeopard its security."

"It is not a little remarkable too, that those attempts to which the memorialists allude, *are not only repugnant to those maxims of free trade*, which the United States have hitherto so forcibly and perseveringly contended for, as the sure foundation of national prosperity; but they are pressed upon us at a moment, when the statesmen of the old world, *in admiration of the success of our policy*, are relaxing the vigour of their own systems, and yielding themselves to the national doctrine, *that national wealth is best promoted by a free interchange of commodities, upon the principles of perfect reciprocity.*"

"The cotton and woollen trade is already loaded with 20 and 25 per cent duties, and if there be added the freight and charges upon importation, the domestic manufacturers have now an encouragement, or a profit, of 30 to 35 per cent more than the European manufacturers possess, if the same articles can be manufactured as cheap at home as abroad." "Why should the farmer and the planter, and the merchant, and the labouring classes of the community, *be taxed for the necessities of life*, a sum equal to more than one quarter part of the whole expenditures on these objects, that the *manufacturers may put this sum into their own pockets?*"

"Upon the whole, the memorialists would respectfully state their unequivocal opinion, that all the measures to which they have alluded, are calculated to impair our naval strength and glory; to injure our most profitable commerce; to diminish in an alarming degree the public revenue; to promote unjustifiable speculation; to enhance the prices of manufactures; to throw the great business and trade of the nation into the hands of a few capitalists, to the exclusion of the industrious and enterprising of other classes; to introduce general distress among commercial artizans and agriculturists; to aggravate the present distress of the other classes of the community; to provoke and extend an undue appetite for fraud and smuggling; and in fine, *to destroy many of the*

great objects for which the constitution of the United States was originally framed and adopted."

NAMES OF THE COMMITTEE :—

**JOSEPH PEABODY,
JOSEPH WHITE,
W. B. CROWNINSHIELD,
PICKERING DODGE,
WILLARD PEELE,
NATH'L. HOOPER,
THOMAS STEVENS,
D. L. PICKMAN.**

The following extracts from a Memorial presented to Congress in 1824, by the citizens of Boston, against any further increase of duties, shew that the opinions and feelings of this community upon this important question, had undergone no change.

"Happily in the present case, intelligent individuals of both the manufacturing and mercantile classes concur in the opinion, *that excessive duties, even on foreign articles, similar to those manufactured in the United States, would materially injure the latter class, as well as other classes connected with, and dependent upon them, without an equivalent benefit to the former.*"

"Inconsistent and injudicious as, in the opinion of your committee, are most of the details of the bill before us, they are insignificant compared with the principle on which it is founded.—This appears to be in substance—that in order to *bring into existence*, and to encourage certain branches of domestic industry, it is expedient to check or destroy certain other branches of that industry, or to embarrass, if not overturn long established occupations, for the sake of building up and extending new ones. But as national profit is but the aggregate of the profits of individuals, we cheerfully submit the question to every intelligent mind, whether it is possible for any government to be so well acquainted with the private concerns of individuals as to determine the direction

of individual industry, and to decide which of the varied employments of domestic industry its citizens shall be compelled to choose."

This report was signed by the following gentlemen, who composed the committee. Part of them were woollen manufacturers, and the majority of them are still very extensively concerned in one or both branches.

ISRAEL THORNDIKE,
ISAAC WINSLOW,
SAMUEL MAY,
JOHN TAPPAN,
GEORGE BOND,
AMOS LAWRENCE,

WILLIAM GODDARD,
HENRY WAINWRIGHT,
WILLIAM STURGIS,
JOSHUA BLAKE,
THOMAS P. CUSHING,
JOHN A. LOWELL.

The unconstitutionality of laws passed by Congress, for the purpose of promoting the interests of one class of men at the expense of all other classes.

The following extracts from Mr. Webster's speech in 1820, will give that gentleman's opinion upon that disputed point:—

"There is a power in names; and those who had pressed the tariff on Congress and on the country, had represented it as immediately, and almost exclusively, connected with domestic industry and national independence. IN HIS OPINION, NO MEASURE COULD PROVE MORE INJURIOUS TO THE INDUSTRY OF THE COUNTRY, and nothing was more fanciful than the opinion, that national independence rendered such a measure necessary. He certainly thought it might be doubted whether Congress would not be acting somewhat *against the spirit and intention of the constitution*, in exercising a power to control essentially the pursuits and occupations of individuals in their private concerns; a power to force great and sudden changes, both of occupation and property, upon individuals, not as incidental to the exercise of any other power, but as substantial and direct power. If such changes were

wrought incidentally only, and were the necessary consequence of such impost as Congress, *for the leading purpose of revenue, should enact, then they could not be complained of.* But he doubted whether Congress fairly possessed the power of turning the incident into the principal; and, instead of leaving manufactures to the protection of such laws as should be passed with a primary regard to revenue, of enacting laws, *with the avowed object of giving a preference to particular manufactures, with an entire disregard to all the considerations of revenue;* and instead of laying such imposts as would best answer the purpose of raising revenue, with the least burden on the public, carrying the impost on certain articles to a burdensome excess, with a full knowledge that the increase of duty will diminish the amount of revenue raised."

"It would hardly be contended that Congress possessed that sort of general power by which it might declare that particular occupations should be pursued in society, and that others should not. If such power belonged to any government in this country, *it certainly did not belong to the general government,*" &c. &c.

The principal object of the manufacturers, in their petition to Congress in 1820, was to obtain an addition to the 25 per centum then levied on woollens. Mr. Webster, it would appear by his speech, doubted the power of Congress to go beyond that rate. The existing duties on woollens, as imposed by the act of 1828, are 50 to 200 per cent.

Mr. H. G. Otis's opinion of the prohibitory system, as extracted from his speech in Congress, when opposing an addition to 25 per cent, the duties then levied on woollens. The existing duties are now 50 to 200 per cent, rising generally on the articles, in proportion to the coarseness of them.

"The bill (then before Congress for altering the act of 1816) was a manifesto of the disposition of a Committee, and of one

branch of the Legislature, to listen to the claim of the manufacturers for a BOUNTY OF FIVE MILLION OF DOLLARS IN THE OUTSET. Let other classes of the community, the farmer, the merchant, the mechanic, be heard on the question, before the irrevocable sanction was given to the system."

Again:—

"If the Legislature, whose resolutions are cited, had been apprized of the ground covered by this bill, and *of the sum of money that must be LEVIED UPON THE CONSUMERS OF FOREIGN GOODS TO GIVE IT EFFECT*, it is not at all apparent that they would have given it this amplitude of construction. They would perhaps say to the manufacturers, *when we give you an inch, you take an ell.*"

The opinions of the North American Review, while under the direction of Mr. Edward Everett, contained in articles repeatedly alleged to have been written by him, and as this assertion has not been denied, it is reasonably inferred that he was the author of them:—

"Prohibiting the introduction of foreign manufactures, or imposing taxes on them, can benefit the manufacturers only so far as it *tends to increase the price in our own market of the articles*, whose importation is thus restrained, and is, therefore, *as this difference of price is paid by the consumer*, A TAX ON THE COMMUNITY, the effect of which is to encourage the production of these articles at home, whereas it does not need encouragement if it is the most lucrative employment—and *ought not to have it, if it is not,*" &c.

Again:—

"Home legislative attempts to encourage one kind of industry, above others, are always either pernicious or fatal."

"Some of the Memorialists have gone so far as to deny the plain proposition, that it is more profitable to nations or to individuals to buy what they want cheap, rather than dear."

"Commerce, though of the utmost importance to nations, is not a proper subject for much legislation, if it is only to be protected and taxed. It should be left free to find its own channels, and then it will contribute to keep up a salutary circulation of property, and take only those directions in which the PEOPLE have some real advantage over others in carrying it on."